

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A software agent executable on a local computer for retrieving a changing target content from a target source on a remote computer, comprising:

5 a foundation having agent tools and library routines;

an agent information containing at least a URL of the target source having a target content; and

10 an agent engine for compiling and executing program instructions using the foundation and the agent information to retrieve the target source, find and store the target content when the software agent is executed.

2. A software agent according to claim 1, wherein the agent information is one of a smart agent information, a custom agent information and an RSS agent information.

3. A software agent according to claim 2, wherein the agent information is a smart agent information.

4. A software agent according to claim 3, further comprising a search agent information.

20 5. A software agent according to claim 4, wherein the smart agent information comprises a target URL, and a web page structure location for the target content.

25 6. A software agent according to claim 3, wherein the smart agent information comprises a target URL, and a web page structure location for the target content.

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7. A software agent according to claim 3, wherein the smart agent information includes a web page structure location for the target content and the agent builder further comprises algorithms for parsing the target source structure to find the target content.

8. A locally executing software application for retrieving and arranging target content from a target source on a remote computer on to a local computer, the software application comprising:

at least one agent having a foundation programming, an agent information containing the target source URL and an agent engine for compiling and executing program instructions using the foundation and agent information, the agent for retrieving target content from the target source and storing the target content on the local computer; and

a publication template for arranging the retrieved, stored target content for display on the local computer.

9. The software application according to claim 8, further comprising an application window capable of displaying the target content arranged by the publication template.

10. The software application according to claim 9, wherein the application window is a web browser.

11. The software application according to claim 8,

wherein the at least one agent comprises a plurality of agents.

12. The software application according to claim 8,  
further comprising scheduling means for executing the at  
least one agent on a periodic schedule.

13. The software application according to claim 8,  
wherein the at least one agent includes parsing means for  
determining the location of target content within the  
structure of the target source.

14. The software application according to claim 13,  
wherein the parsing means comprises agent information having  
target content source structure information and algorithms  
for parsing the structure of the target source to find a  
target source structure containing the target content  
identified by the agent information.

15. A method of retrieving a target content from a  
remote computer, the method comprising:

providing a local computer having a memory, a  
storage device, and a connection to the remote computer;

providing a software application having at least  
one agent, each agent comprising a foundation programming,  
an agent information containing a target source URL for the  
target content and an agent engine for compiling and  
executing program instructions using the foundation and  
agent information;

executing the at least one agent on the local

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computer to retrieve the target content from the remote computer; and

storing the retrieved target content on the local computer.

5           16. The method according to claim 15, further comprising displaying the stored target content on the local computer.

10           17. The method according to claim 16, wherein displaying the stored target content comprises providing a publication template having formatting, selecting stored content to display using the publication template formatting, and arranging the stored content according to the publication template formatting in an application window on the local computer.

15           18. The method according to claim 15, wherein executing the agent comprises running the at least one agent, generating with the at least one agent an instruction to retrieve at least one file identified by the target source URL to the local computer, finding the target content within the retrieved at least one file and copying the target content.

20           19. The method according to claim 18, wherein storing the retrieved target content further comprises saving the copied target content as an agent result file on the local computer.

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21. The method according to claim 20, wherein  
5 displaying the stored target content comprises providing a  
publication template having formatting, selecting at least  
one agent result file to display using the publication  
template formatting, and arranging the stored content in the  
agent result file according to the publication template  
0 formatting in an application window on the local computer.

20 23. The method according to claim 18, wherein finding the target content comprises parsing the target source using compiled and stored agent instructions, and locating a structure within the parsed target source containing the target content.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein locating  
the structure comprises applying a plurality of algorithms  
25 to the parsed target source.

25. A method for building a software agent for retrieving target content from a remote computer to a local computer, the method comprising:

5 identifying a type of agent being built;  
identifying a target source URL having target content;  
storing the target source URL in an agent information;  
identifying the target content within the target source;

10 parsing the target source to determine the location of a structure of the target source containing the target content;

storing the location and structure of the target content in the agent information;

15 generating a set of program instructions for retrieving the target source and locating the target content structure; and

storing the program instructions and agent information to form the software agent.

20 26. The method of claim 25, wherein identifying the target content comprises identifying start marker text and identifying end marker text.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the start marker text and end marker text each comprise one of plain text, stylized text, and HTML syntax elements.

25 28. The method of claim 26, wherein the start marker text and end marker text define target content separated by non-text web page elements.

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29. The method of claim 26, wherein the target content is contained in two different structures in the target source.

5 30. The method of claim 25, further comprising verifying the accuracy of the stored program instructions and agent information by executing the agent on the local computer.

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